

## THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART

AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

NEWS FLASHES

November,

1939

LOAN EXHIBITION - CONTEMPORARY GERMAN PAINTINGS: For the month of November, the three loan galleries will be installed with a group of oil paintings and water colours of exceptional interest. It is the work of a number of contemporary German artists who have been banned from painting or exhibiting in their native land.

Less than a year after the National Socialist Government had been formed in Germany, the regimentation of art began. All artists, in order to teach or exhibit, must belong to the Reich Chamber of Art which is under the Ministry of Propaganda, that is, Goebbels. An organization similar to a guild was formed which encourages all artists who portray such desirable qualities as patriotism, heroism, family piety, the purity of woman, and the love of one's native country. At the same time, it discourages and opposes all works which have a problematic, sensational, or immoral approach, any which represent womanhood in an unfavorable light or malign or make fun of soldiers or heroes.

The majority of German artists who had gained international reputations refused to join this organization and soon found that they could not exhibit and even their painting was discouraged. German museums had always been loyal supporters of their living artists and vast numbers of their canvases were in these public collections. Soon the work of all men who refused to conform to the new regulations were removed from the museums. Several years ago a large exhibition of this "subversive" art was held in Munich. In addition, much of it has been sold at auction and privately and finally the rebellious artists were encouraged to leave Germany and to take their paintings with them. Such well known men as Max Beckman, George Grosz, Carl Hofer, Oskar Kokoschka, and Karl Schmidt-Rotluff are among those who have left their native land.

A year ago an exhibition of their work was held in London under the auspices of such English artists as Augustus Johns and Herbert Read. It was so successful that plans were made to bring it to America. Our own Gallery was approached first as it was known that there was a special interest in contemporary art here and that we had had exhibitions of Corinth, Beckman, and Schmidt-Rotluff. These plans were perfected and the Nelson-Atkins Gallery is the first major museum to show this exhibition of banned German Art.

The group contains sixty-five items and includes not only the work of living men, but also of those who have died recently and whose work has been banned from public museums. Franz Marc was killed on the field of battle in the last war, yet his superb and colourful paintings have been removed for some unknown reason. This is the case also of the noted sculptor Wilhelm Lembruck who is represented in the exhibition by drawings. Lovis Corinth and Max Slevogt were the outstanding German painters of the early part of the twentieth century and every public museum included dozens of examples of their work. Now all this has been removed and these two men have been added to the contemporary artists of this exhibition and are well represented.

Other exhibitors will be Max Beckmann, Max Ernst, George Grosz, Carl Hofer, who won the first prize at the Carnegie International two years ago, Paul Klee, Oskar Kokoschka, also a Carnegie winner, Otto Muller, Emil Nolde, Max Pechstein, Oskar Schlemmer, and Karl Schmidt-Rotluff.

The exhibition will open on Sunday, November 5, and will continue through Sunday, the 26th.



MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH: During the past year, the Gallery has been exceptionally successful in one of the rarest fields of collecting, that of Egyptian Sculpture. Last December the acquisition of a superb, heroic torso from the Vth Dynasty was announced, and now there will be exhibited as Masterpiece of the Month for November, a new find, a XIIth Dynasty Portrait Head of a Nobleman, life sized and in black granite.

The greatness of Egypt which had been built up under the IVth and Vth Dynasties came to an end with the weak VIth Dynasty and art almost disappeared from the land. Then followed a dark period of several dynasties which ended with the disappearance of the Old Kingdom about the year 2100 B.C. A new period called the Middle Kingdom then began with the XIth Dynasty and was well established by the time of the XIIth Dynasty which commenced with the rule of Amenemhet. This Pharaoh was a strong and vigorous king who instituted many reforms, especially on behalf of the peasants and the middle class. His brilliant administration brought a return of economic prosperity.

One of the most important manifestations of this XIIth Dynasty was a renaissance of the arts and especially a second flowering of the art of the sculptor. The men who carved again conquered the hard material and gave it that stamp of nobility and grandeur which is so characteristically Egyptian. They introduced, however, a new note. Just as the administration of the Pharaoh had become more socially conscious, so the sculptor became more interested in his subject as a man.

Now the rulers and nobles became less godlike, more human and were treated realistically. The tradition of showing them young and in their prime was abandoned and idealization gave way to realism. Age was no longer glossed over, but the pouches under the eyes, the lines of suffering along the nose, the tight, cruel lips, and the stern chins were delineated with a truthful and unwavering chisel.

All these characteristics can be seen in the new Masterpiece. It is not a beautiful face, but one born to rule, aristocratic, dominating. The massive wig with its symmetrical waves is merely an abstraction of hair, but as such it accentuates all the more the extraordinary sensitivity of the modeling of the high cheek bones and the life-like outline of the chin. The unknown sculptor has achieved a remarkable expression of immobility masking a vibrant life and personality. Viewed as a completely successful example of portraiture, the head assumes a beauty which transcends mere regularity of features.

The identity of the head is not known, but he must have been a noble as the great wig would signify. If he had been a Pharaoh, he would have been shown wearing the headdress with great wings, bound by a filet and a coiled asp.

XIIth Dynasty Portrait Heads are extremely rare. There are a bare dozen in the museums of Europe and Cairo. As far as is known, this is the only life-sized example in America and thus assumes an enhanced importance.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LECTURES: The series of lectures on French painting will be continued in Atkins Auditorium. The interest in these has been very great and the attendance has been gratifying. The art classes of Park College have joined the group of schools offering these lectures as an allied course of study.

On Wednesday Evening, November 1st, the subject will be Paintings of the 14th Century. As was the case in Italy, this was the formative period. The development of the Gothic Cathedral with its stained glass meant an end to frescos as decoration and the artist turned to easel paintings and altarpieces. In many instances these were merely enlarged miniatures and due to the strong school of illuminations already developed, 14th century painting in France was marked by exceptional finish and charm.

On the evenings of November 8th and 15th, the painting of the 15th century will be discussed in two lectures. Now for the first time names begin to emerge and it is the period of the colourful Jean Fouquet, Jean Malouel, Nicolas Froment, and the mysterious Master of Moulins who may be the Jean Perreal who was the artist-valet of the fabulously wealthy Cardinal Rollin of Lyons. It is the



age of Jeanne d'Arc and the Dauphin Charles who was finally crowned at Reims. Portraits of Charles VII and his mistress, Agnes Sorel, begin to appear and of the sly and superstitious Louis XI who abandoned his throne for one day to the poet Francois Villon. Modern France emerged in the 15th century and the painting of that period is all important.

There will be no lecture on the evening of November 22nd and the series will be resumed on November 29th when the subject will be the 16th century. This was the period of Francis I, who brought the Renaissance to France from Italy and invited da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, and Benvenuto Cellini to come and work for him at Fontainebleau. It is a period marked by strong native French traditions of portraiture plus the Renaissance forms of the south. It was from a mingling of these two influences that the great painting of Louis XIV developed.

The Gallery is open on Wednesday Evenings from seven to ten and there is no charge to the Gallery or the lectures which begin at 8:00 P.M.

FRIENDS OF ART: The study group of the Friends of Art will hold two meetings in the Library on the Wednesday mornings of November 8 and 22 at 11:00 A.M. At that time the Director will discuss the contemporary German paintings in the loan exhibition. Readers of the News Letter are again invited to join this worthwhile organization which is aiding the Gallery to form an outstanding collection of contemporary American paintings.

GALLERY CHANGES: A group of drawings from the permanent collection has been installed in Gallery XVI. All early examples from the French School have been included in order that they may serve as additional material for study in connection with the series of lectures on French Painting.

The tradition of colour prints has continued in Japan up to the present day, especially in the work of Kobayashi Kiyochika, Yoshida Hiroshi, and Hashiguchi Goyo. An exhibition of prints by these interesting men has been installed in Gallery XXIV. Several colourful costumes of the period have been included for their added interest.

RADIO PROGRAMS: "Intimate Glimpses into the Lives of the Masters" is the title of the new series of radio programs over Station WDAF which began on October 29th with the story of Vincent Van Gogh. The Gallery, in cooperation with the University of Kansas City, is presenting these dramatizations of the vivid personalities and exciting events represented in the museum collection. The programs will be given on alternate Sundays at 9:30 P.M. throughout the winter. Paul Gauguin, the French painter whose beautiful portrait of his Tahitian wife, Tehura, was an important Gallery acquisition of the past year, will be the subject of the broadcast on November 12th. Students of the Drama Department of the University, under the direction of Carl Johnson, are presenting these dramatizations prepared by members of the Gallery staff.

The idea of presenting art history in dramatized form over the air was first carried out by the Gallery in a series of broadcasts last year. National approbation of this form of art education has come this season in a series of similar programs being presented by the NBC network from New York.

THE LITTLE MUSEUM FOR YOUNG MODERNS - has for its current show an exchange exhibition of the work of the childrens' classes of the Montreal Art Association. It consists of creative paintings and designs done in watercolour and photographs of sculptured clay objects by children from eight to fifteen years of age.

The next exhibition, to be opened on November 9th, will feature miniature period rooms and furniture lent through the generosity of Mrs. George Leiter and Mr. George Dovel. These will remain on exhibition until December 15th.



CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER

Wed., Nov. 1 - 8:00 - Lecture - French Painting of the 14th Cen.  
 Sun., " 5 - 3:30 - Concert - Federal Concert Orchestra  
 Wed., " 8 - 11:00 - Library - Friends of Art Study Class  
 8:00 - Lecture - French Painting of the 15th Cen. I  
 Sun., " 12 - 3:30 - Concert - Van Duzee Singers of the Conserva-  
 tory of Music  
 9:30 - Broadcast - Station WDAF  
 Wed., " 15 - 8:00 - Lecture - French Painting of the 15th Cen. II  
 Sun., " 19 - 3:30 - Concert - Sigma Alpha Iota  
 Wed., " 22 - 11:00 - Library - Friends of Art Study Class  
 No Evening Lecture  
 Thurs. " 23 - Gallery Closed - Thanksgiving Day  
 Sun., " 26 - 4:00 - Concert - Sponsored by Mrs. Lois Black Hunt  
 and Miss Edna Forsythe  
 9:30 - Broadcast - Station WDAF  
 Wed., " 29 - 8:00 - Lecture - French Painting of the 16th Cen.

William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art  
 Atkins Museum of Fine Arts  
 Kansas City, Missouri

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